

R 020623Z APR 09  
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INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
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UNCLAS ADDIS ABABA 000754

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND PM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [SO](#) [UG](#) [BU](#)

SUBJECT: USAU: STATUS OF COMMAND AND CONTROL PROJECT FOR  
AFRICAN UNION

REF: 08 ADDIS ABABA 1718

¶1. Summary: USAU held a C3IS workshop on Feb. 25-27 to revive the U.S. commitment to the African Union (AU) for a communications package for the African continent's African Standby Force (ASF) program. The meeting brought together civilian and military communication experts from the AU, UN, U.S. and the EU, as well as members from the AU's Peace and Security Commission and Infrastructure and Communications divisions. Among the key recommendations from the workshop are to provide immediate relief for the current communications challenge faced by the AU's mission in Somalia, and to begin to create a 24-hour operation center for the AU's Peace and Security Operations Division. End Summary.

#### Background

¶2. As a result of a September 2005 G-8 meeting at the AU, the USG and the AU entered into an historical agreement to substantially upgrade the integration and communications capacity of the AU in executing the AU's "Roadmap for the Establishment of the African Standby Force." From this, the U.S. Department of State agreed to support a Command, Control, and Communication Information System to provide a High Frequency (HF) radio voice network, with a follow-on Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) capability, to facilitate interoperability and information sharing between the AU, the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and two Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and the ASF Brigade headquarters. This system would link, via voice, data, and fax: (i) the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; (ii) the five headquarters of the regional ASF brigades; (iii) their subordinate units; and (iv) the proposed depot facility. The backdrop of this program was to support regional peacekeeping and counter-narcotics efforts through Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) funding.

¶3. The AU C3IS project, originally envisioned as critical to support the ASF, has languished for four years. As a result, the AU still does not have the C3IS architecture in place. Between contract award in 2005 and 2008 there have been many missteps, miscalculations, misunderstandings, and a general lack of effective communication between and among the USG, its contractors and the AU. The workshop was held to review the status of the existing project as well as the U.S. commitment to the project.

#### Current Situation and Proposed Look Forward

¶4. Currently the AU does not have equipment to monitor data and control access to sensitive data. It cannot communicate in real time with deployed forces or effectively with regional ASF headquarters. AU Peace and Security Operations Division (PSOD)/ASF is not able to guarantee reliable

communications among ASF commanders during crisis situations.

An example of this is the recent Vehicle-born Improvised Explosive Device in February 2009 at the AMISOM Burundi base in Mogadishu which left 11 soldiers dead. The PSOD head was not able to get real time information from his commander on the ground due to lack of communications. Currently, PSOD/ASF forces in Mogadishu use the open web and calling cards on cell phones when coverage is available to communicate. This allows anyone, including the enemy, to obtain information about battlefield activity. Lastly, there is no dedicated maintenance and support for any communications gear.

¶5. The workshop's findings were as follows: First, C3IS should be refocused to the PSOD. In crisis situations, PSOD cannot compete with other entities for access to scarce network resources. A dedicated network for operations support is required. Second, PSOD needs a robust system with increased availability, security, and quality of service. PSOD must be able to trust, and rely on, system performance during operational missions. Third, PSOD should have ownership and discretionary access control of the network and data. This is to ensure control over sensitive data involving operations and to prevent others access to information they do not need to know. Fourth, C3IS Node locations should be at the PSOD level, which includes the ASF headquarters and Continental Logistics Base; the three RECs (including ECOWAS, ECCAS, and SADC), and the two RMs (including NARC and EASBRICOM), along with their regional planning elements and logistics depot in each of the five regions mentioned; and brigade level headquarters and field mission headquarters for civilian, police, and military.

¶6. In addition to the longer term recommendations outlined in para 5, participants made the following recommendations for immediate relief for the current communication challenges: First, complete the current VSAT installation in Mogadishu. VSAT is designed to create a direct, reliable, and secure connection, through satellite links, between personnel in the field and the AU's 24-hour situation room. It is capable of linking field officers to AU staff both by e-mail and Voice Over Internet Protocol, expanding and increasing the speed of real-time communication, coordination, and reporting. Second, establish a basic PSOD operations center which could be as simple as a dedicated small office or container with electrical, internet, phone, and fax capability. Third, utilize the computers and associated non-ITAR restricted equipment from the already provided C3IS equipment that was procured from the initial program. Fourth, leverage existing AU capabilities for RECs, RMs, and AMISOM. Fifth, acquire at least one satellite phone so that the PSOD can have some reliable communications going forward with the AMISOM commander.

¶7. Finally, it was agreed that the way forward includes: Presenting the recommendations to the USAU Ambassador and the AU hierarchy for understanding and agreement; revising the MOU between the U.S. and the AU; developing a network policy for PSOD/ASF system; obtaining dedicated resources, including personnel for operations, maintenance, and training; establishing a dedicated PSOD Network Operations Center with basic initial capability and enhancing it to full capability (i.e. secure voice, internet, fax); establishing a PSOD C3I Network Operations Center with full capability; extending the capability of the PSOD C3IS to the RECs and the RMs.

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